

# School:

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was delayed by reconstruction until Thursday.

Few students reveled in the arrival of the 2006-07 school year more than the Camas sixth-graders at Liberty, rebuilt for about \$15.5 million. Learning the ropes of middle school, students said they were enjoying class schedules that had them switching teachers, as well as subjects.

"You don't get bored with the teachers," explained Matthew Randall.

Cafeteria workers dished out pizza and nachos, with promises of more, healthy choices to come soon. Small devices let many students pay for lunch by pressing a fingertip scanner to charge the cost from a pre-paid account. The modern tools contrasted with the preserved paper-spool motif in the lunchroom decor that has paid tribute to the city's papermaking legacy since 1957.

Randall was content to

munch his packed lunch, however. Within a few minutes, he downed a turkey sandwich, fruit snack, Fritos corn chips, Hi-C orange drink, granola bar and some Oreo cookies, employing a prodigious, 11-year-old metabolism most adults could only wish for.

Principal Marilyn Boerke was chasing dreams of her own, having ushered in about 660 students, about 30 more than expected. That followed 20 months of nonstop planning and fretting, she said. Finally, Liberty was properly launched with relative calm and in style, including its rows of fire-engine red student lockers and fearsome Lions mascot etched on the foyer and gym floors.

"It went better than I expected," Boerke said. "I haven't slept all summer. It's been one decision after another: Are the colors matching, is the carpet installed? I look forward to sleeping tonight," she said with a smile.

Not all glitches have been solved. Clocks are missing from classroom and office walls, still on order from the



KRISTINA WRIGHT for The Columbian

supplier, as are 68 of 70 school garbage cans, Boerke said. "Honestly, if that's the worst problem we have, we're in great shape," she said.

One more hiccup came before dawn Tuesday: Two youths managed to break into the school through a trapdoor on the roof about 2:45 a.m., then wreaked a modest

amount of mischief. They set off a fire extinguisher, broke one small window and two surplus computer monitors, and scrawled graffiti on a classroom flag.

What the pair failed to do, Boerke said, was elude sophisticated security cameras that tracked nearly every move, including their entry. The youths

were quickly in Camas police custody and the damage was cleaned up before students arrived, she said.

## Two new grade schools

Two blocks away, opening day passed without incident at James D. Zellerbach Elementary School, newly configured

to serve kindergarten-through-fifth grade after years serving only grades five and six.

New play areas and a color scheme that splits the JDZ campus into "earth," "sky" and "water" core areas to help guide young students have set a positive tone, said Principal Patricia Erdmann. So has the teamwork of teachers and staff newly assembled for about 400 students, most commuting from the western edge of Camas after school enrollment boundaries were redrawn.

"This is a school for little kids" is the underlying message, Erdmann said.

The other local school christened on Tuesday was Eisenhower Elementary in Hazel Dell, where a newly constructed building replaced an existing facility. Principal Glenys Paveglio said 451 students filed into their new home for a "very smooth opening," after Cub Scouts performed a flag-raising ceremony.

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**The Liberty Lions mascot rules center court inside the new Camas middle school gymnasium. District students had the chance to vote on both the mascot and school colors last year. The school colors and other remaining touches pay homage to the building's 46-year run as home of the Camas High School Papermakers, ending in June 2003.**